

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A system for manipulating and updating data in a backend system, said apparatus comprising:
 - a messaging client for exchanging messages over a network with a messaging server to and from other messaging clients and said backend system; and
 - an automated agent which is coupled between said messaging server and said backend system, which is capable of accepting requests and issuing responses, and
 - which obtains and uses data input from said messaging client to determine said manipulating and updating of data;

wherein said automated agent is capable of asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and

wherein said automated agent initiates messaging communications to said other messaging clients and mediates a discussion related to said input data.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent appears as a buddy on a buddy list.
6. (previously presented) The system of claim 4, wherein said other messaging clients are associated with prospective meeting attendees and said discussion relates to a meeting of said attendees.
7. (previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent is capable of responding with any of, but not limited to: information, confirmation, availability, and a request for additional information.

8. (previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said messaging client exchanges messages via said network with said messaging server by any of, but not limited to:

- two-way messaging;
- email;
- a paging network; and
- instant messaging systems.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (previously presented) The system of Claim 1, wherein said messaging clients engage in dialogs with said automated agent.

12. (currently amended) The system of Claim 1, wherein said automated agent performs any of:

- proactively sending, to said messaging client, messages comprising, but not limited to, alerts and reminders;
- ~~asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and~~
- determining resource availability.

13. (currently amended) A method for manipulating and updating data in a backend system, said method comprising:

- providing a messaging client for exchanging messages over a network with a messaging server to and from other messaging clients and said backend system; and

- providing an automated agent which is coupled between said messaging server and providing said backend system, which is capable of accepting requests and issuing responses, and which obtains and uses data input from said messaging client to determine said manipulating and updating of data;

wherein said automated agent is capable of asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and

wherein said automated agent initiates messaging communications to said other messaging clients and mediates a discussion related to said input data.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent appears as a buddy on a buddy list.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said automated agent is capable of responding with any of, but not limited to: information, confirmation, availability, and a request for additional information.

20. (previously presented) The method of Claim 13, wherein said messaging client exchanges messages via said network with said messaging server by any of, but not limited to:

two-way messaging;
email;
a paging network; and
instant messaging systems.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (previously presented) The method of Claim 13, wherein said messaging clients engage in dialogs with said automated agent.

24. (currently amended) The method of Claim 13, said automated agent performing any of:

proactively sending, to said messaging client, messages comprising, but not limited to, alerts and reminders;

~~asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and determining resource availability.~~

25. (currently amended) A robot agent for receiving Instant Messages from a first user-client and responsively interacting between the first user-client, a calendar server system, and other user-clients to enable each of the user-clients to enter queries and updating data into, and to receive queries and data from, the calendar server system;

wherein said robot agent is capable of asking a series of questions to said messaging client to determine intent; and

wherein said robot agent initiates messaging communications to said other user-clients and mediates a discussion related to data input by said first-user client.